



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
Press Release**

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18 COMMUNITIES ACROSS SOUTH COAST AWARDED FUNDING FOR LOCAL PLANNING, ZONING, HOUSING AND OPEN SPACE INITIATIVES

RAYNHAM – Wednesday, November 2, 2011 – The Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development today announced that 18 communities will receive technical assistance awards in the fourth round of the South Coast Technical Assistance Awards for local planning, zoning, housing, and open space initiatives. The awards, ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000, were announced at the Southeastern Massachusetts Commuter Rail Task Force Meeting.

“Today’s announced awards will provide technical assistance for local planning initiatives in the South Coast region,” said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray.

“Through the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Corridor Land Use Plan, we are bringing together local communities as we continue to think regionally to advance infrastructure, transportation, and overall economic development opportunities as part of the state’s economic growth strategy.”

“The South Coast Rail Economic Development and Corridor Land Use Plan has provided the region with a framework for growth, development and preservation.” said Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Greg Bialecki. “Massachusetts continues to assist the South Coast communities through targeted and purposeful public investment as the region plans ahead for new growth and development.”

“These technical assistance awards further the goals of South Coast Rail by aligning regional development and land use with the corridor plan,” said Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Secretary and CEO Richard A. Davey.

The South Coast Rail Plan demonstrates the Patrick-Murray Administration’s commitment to intentional and targeted state investment to enhance the development and sustainable growth of communities. Unveiled in 2009 by Governor Deval Patrick, the plan provides a framework for maximizing the economic and environmental benefits while preparations begin for the new rail line.

In order to ensure that growth occurs equitably and evenly while preserving the region’s distinct character, MassDOT and the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development have partnered with the region’s planning agencies, the Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD), Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and Old Colony Planning Council (OCPC), to assist communities’ proactive local planning and preservation efforts.

"MAPC is greatly appreciative of the continuing support for smart growth planning that is exhibited by the Technical Assistance grants," said MAPC Executive Director Marc Draisen. "These grants will enable MAPC to continue its work with communities on implementing the smart growth concepts included in the South Coast Rail plans, such as the potential changes to improve the downtown Stoughton zoning."

"The technical assistance offered by South Coast Rail is another demonstration of the state's commitment to this project and will help prepare the region through planning and preservation activities," said Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District Steve Smith. "SRPEDD is pleased to be partners with the state in providing this technical assistance."

As the Commonwealth continues to advance the South Coast Rail Economic Development and Corridor Land Use Plan, technical assistance has been made available to communities for planning and zoning efforts which demonstrate consistency with the corridor plan as well as clear and achievable outcomes. During the fourth round of funding, technical assistance was made available for the following areas: station area planning and zoning; economic development and transportation; housing plans and zoning changes; and open space preservation. Preference was given to communities that submitted proposals which furthered the Corridor Plan and demonstrated clear and achievable outcomes.

The following communities will be receiving technical assistance:

Acushnet/ Fairhaven

The Towns of Acushnet and Fairhaven and the City of New Bedford have been working on a regional walkway system along the Acushnet River. This grant award of \$20,000 will enable SRPEDD to continue to facilitate the Riverwalk planning process, provide the towns with maps, a PowerPoint presentation and flyers for public outreach and develop a rendering of the Riverwalk for public distribution.

Dartmouth

SRPEDD will work with the Town to develop a Housing Production Plan. This \$15,000 award, is the first technical assistance grant for Dartmouth. The proposal includes engaging elected officials and the community to create a plan for additional affordable workforce housing, which is an identified need on the South Coast.

Easton

The Town of Easton will receive \$10,000 in technical assistance to improve bicycle and pedestrian connections between Easton's 3 PDAs to support the Corridor Plan's goals of improving sustainability in the region. OCPC will assist the Town in developing a plan and recommendations for roadway and intersection improvements that will improve safety for bicyclists and enhance driver sensitivity. The Town will compile a bikeway best practices guidebook suited to the Town's mixed urban and rural roadway infrastructure.

Fall River

Fall River will receive \$25,000 in technical assistance for professional services to implement the recommendations emerging from the Battleship Cove Rail Station TA planning. SRPEDD will assist the City in working with a landscape architect and

engineers to develop a streetscape improvement plan along Water and Ferry Streets. The plan will provide a clear link between the existing waterfront boardwalk to the north and waterfront walkway south of the proposed Battleship Cove commuter rail station area. The assistance will be used for public outreach, a rendering of the improvements and preparation of a 25% design plan for the City.

Foxborough

MAPC will assist Foxborough with development of a Housing Production Plan. The Town will receive \$21,000 in technical assistance for the following activities: developing a community-wide vision, goals, and objectives for housing; conducting a housing inventory, needs and demand analysis; addressing barriers to production; and creating an implementation plan.

Freetown

SRPEDD will continue to work with the Town on its rezoning efforts along South Main Street in the area surrounding the proposed Freetown commuter rail station. The town will receive \$15,000 in technical assistance to rezone for a mixed use district in the station area.

Lakeville

SRPEDD will work with the Town to update and complete its Housing Production Plan with 2010 census information. Lakeville will receive \$10,000 in technical assistance to complete this work.

Mansfield

SRPEDD will assist the Town of Mansfield with TOD rezoning efforts surrounding its proposed commuter rail station. This, \$7,000 grant is the first technical assistance grant awarded to the town.

Mattapoisett

SRPEDD will assist the Town of Mattapoisett with a review of its most recent Open Space Plan. Mattapoisett will receive \$10,000 in technical assistance to identify segments where the community will need assistance with creating an updated plan.

New Bedford

The City of New Bedford will work with SRPEDD on improving the pedestrian bike and vehicular access between the downtown and the Proposed Whale's Tooth Station area. The area identified as the "octopus" and the adjacent Quest Center/Armory area are key to this link. The City proposes to prepare a concept plan for the area based on public workshops, a Google Sketch-up model and a hand drawn rendering based on the concept plan that evolves from the discussions. The City will receive \$25,000 in technical assistance to conduct this work.

North Attleborough

Under previous technical assistance, North Attleborough has completed several rezoning efforts and is currently in the public outreach and hearing process for the downtown TOD bylaw. As part of this request, SRPEDD will assist the Town in completing segments of a new Open Space Plan. The Town will receive \$25,000 in technical assistance to complete the plan.

Raynham

SRPEDD will assist the community with a major rezoning effort along the Route 138 corridor. The \$20,000 technical assistance grant will support public outreach; provide detailed mapping of the existing and potential revised zoning boundaries; identify environmental constraints, setbacks and buffers. SRPEDD will also assist with the preparation of zoning revisions for town meeting.

Seekonk

With the completion of the Town's Housing Production Plan, this grant will allow SRPEDD to assist Seekonk with the preparation of an inclusionary housing bylaw to narrow the gap between the Town's affordable housing supply and the need for housing among low to moderate income households. The Town will receive \$7,000 in technical assistance for the work.

Somerset

The Town will receive \$10,000 in technical assistance to follow through on recommendations from the FY11 public outreach and concept plan for the Slade's Ferry Crossing PDA by preparing a mixed use bylaw. SRPEDD will assist the Town with this work.

Stoughton

MAPC will present to the Board of Selectmen the results of the FY11 downtown economic development analysis and will hold a meeting with the downtown business owners to discuss the results of the study. MAPC will work with the Town to develop recommendations for changes to the downtown zoning and the parameters for special permits review. The Town will receive \$5,000 in technical assistance for the work.

OCPC will also work with the Town to review opportunities to maximize appropriate development in the Park Street area, along Route 27, reducing development pressure on the surrounding neighborhoods. The review will include the identification of infrastructure investments and regulatory changes needed to support future growth in these areas. The Town will receive \$10,000 in technical assistance for this portion of work.

Westport

As outlined in the Narrows Redevelopment Area Report and Concept Map, SRPEDD will assist the Town in developing zoning and permitting to support a mix of uses to accommodate current housing as well as light manufacturing, packaging and warehousing, which were identified in the plan as economic development opportunities in this area. Westport will receive \$15,000 in technical assistance.

For more information on the South Coast Rail Project, please visit

<http://www.southcoastrail.com/>

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